

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ADDIS 04495 231033Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-15 PM-05 INR-07 DODE-00 NSC-05 CIAE-00
EUR-12 IO-13 PRS-01 SP-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00
ISO-00 /071 W
-----050926 231235Z /44-S

O R 230938Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4965
INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 4495

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, US, SO
SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE CONCERNING ARMS FOR SOMALIA

REF: STATE 172367

1. AS INDICATED OUR 4264, ETHIOPIAN REACTION TO OUR DECISION
IN PRINCIPLE TO SUPPLY ARMS TO SOMALIA IS QUITE PREDICTABLE.
INDEED, SINCE FIGHTING IN OGADEN HAS ESCALATED SINCE REFTTEL
SENT, WE CAN EXPECT EVEN SHARPER REACTION NOW AND AS DEPT
AWARE, WE HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO SEE CHARGES THAT US ON BASIS

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OF SECRET DEAL HAS BEGUN TO INDIRECTLY ARM SOMALIA IN ORDER
VIOLATE ETHIOPIAN TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND REVERSE COURSE
OF REVOLUTION. NON-EXISTENT M-16 RIFLES HAVE BEEN INVENTED.

2. SO FAR, THIS PROBABLY PROPAGANDE. EPMG HAS HAD NOTHING
SOLID TO GO ON. MOMENT WE GO PUBLIC, THAT WILL CHANGE AND
DIRG WILL BE FORCED CONSIDER WHATEVER WE SAY IN POLICY TERMS.

ARMING SOMALIA WILL BE SEEN BY DIRG IN CONTEXT OF MOST SENSITIVE ISSUE WE COULD PICK TODAY IN ETHIOPIA, NAMELY ETHIOPIAN'S DEEP COMMITMENT TO MAINTAINING ITS TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, AND NO ONE HERE WILL BELIEVE FOR ONE MINUTE THAT ANY ARMS FOR SOMALIA WE MAY PROVIDE WILL BE LIMITED TO DEFENSIVE PURPOSES. QUESTION THEN BECOMES WHAT DIRG WILL FEEL COMPELLED TO DO, AND I CANNOT REALLY ANSWER THAT QUESTION AT THIS TIME. THEY MAY CHOOSE A NASTY PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN BUT DO NOTHING MORE. WE MUST ANTICIPATE, HOWEVER, THAT THEY WILL CONSIDER OTHER POSSIBILITIES, RANGING FROM FURTHER CUTS IN THIS EMBASSY INCLUDING POSSIBLE CLOSURE OF AID MISSION TO SHUTTING US DOWN ALTOGETHER, OR THEY MAY MAKE LIFE DIFFICULT FOR REMAINING AMERICAN COMMUNITY HERE. ANSWER MAY BE DETERMINED IN FACT BY COURSE OF EVENTS IN OGADEN ITSELF.

3. ALL OF THIS WE ASSUME WAS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION BY DEPT WHEN DECISION IN PRINCIPLE TO SUPPLY ARMS TO SOMALIA WAS MADE. QUESTION NOW BECOMES HOW AND WHEN ETHIOPIANS LEARN ABOUT IT. PRESS GUIDANCE REFTEL TOUCHES ONLY UPON SOMALI REQUEST AND FACT THAT WE ARE CONSIDERING IT, BUT AVOIDS REFERENCE TO DECISION ITSELF. SINCE THIS LIKELY SURFACE VERY SOON, THERE IS MERIT IN PROVIDING EPMG WITH EXACT TEXT OF GUIDANCE. INFORMING THEM OF DECISION ITSELF, HOWEVER, IS IN MY VIEW, DIFFERENT MATTER. AGAIN THERE IS MERIT IN PROVIDING THEM WITH A CAREFULLY WORDED TEXT TO AT LEAST INSURE THAT THEY ARE TOLD EXACTLY WHAT IS IS WE WANT TO TELL THEM. THAT
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THEIR PROPAGANDA MACHINE WILL NO DOUBT DISTORT IT LATER FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES WILL BE UNAVOIDABLE. HOWEVER, I HAVE CONSIDERABLE PROBLEM WITH IDEA OF TELLING THEM OF OUR DECISION UNILATERALLY AND IN EFFECT, OF GETTING OUT IN FRONT OF OUR ALLIES IN THIS MATTER.

4. THUS, FROM TRAFFIC WE HAVE SEEN, WE HAVE GONE TO CONSIDERABLE LENGTHS TO MAKE QUESTION OF SUPPLY OF ARMS TO SOMALIA A WESTERN OR MULTINATIONAL EFFORT, PRESUMABLY I WOULD THINK, TO CUSHION AND DIFFUSE IMPACT OF OUR EFFORTS BOTH IN INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC TERMS. TO NOW INFORM THE ONE COUNTRY THAT CAN BE EXPECTED REACT BADLY BOTH PRIVATELY AND PUBLICLY UNILATERALLY OF OUR DECISION WILL RISK, IT SEEMS TO ME, JETTISONING THIS CAREFULLY PLANNED EFFORT. IT MAY ALSO FORCE BRITISH AND FRENCH INTO SAYING SOMETHING AS WELL, WHICH THEY MAY NOT AT THIS STAGE WANT TO DO. IN ADDITION, WHILE I FULLY RECOGNIZE COMMITMENT THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN GIVEN TO SOMALIS, IF THERE IS ANY POSSIBILITY THAT AFTER CONSIDERATION, USG MAY DECIDE THAT WE WILL NOT, OR CANNOT, FOR ARMS TRANSFER POLICY REASONS GO AHEAD WITH PROVIDING ARMS FOR SOMALIA, WE SHALL HAVE NEEDLESSLY RISKED PROVOKING ETHIOPIANS NOW.

5. ACCORDINGLY, I THINK IT PREFERABLE THAT UNLESS THERE IS IMMINENT DANGER DECISION ITSELF WILL BECOME PUBLIC, WE RESTRICT OURSELVES FOR PRESENT TO TELLING ETHIOPIANS OF PRESS GUIDANCE REFTEL. IF DEPT FEELS WE HAVE TO GO FURTHER, I WOULD RECOMMEND CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH BRITISH AND FRENCH WITH VIEW TO INFORMING ETHIOPIANS OF OUR DECISION AS PART OF A MULTINATIONAL RATHER THAN SOLO EFFORT. I DO NOT THINK IT WILL SERVE OUR INTERESTS TO GET OUT IN FRONT ON THIS MATTER.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, ARMS, INSTRUCTIONS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
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Drafter: n/a
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Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770263-0794
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From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770726/aaaaawln.tel
Line Count: 125
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Litigation Codes:
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TAGS: MASS, US, SO, ET
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